

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
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FM USINT BAGHDAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4375
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 0587

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT IZ
SUBJECT: IRAQI CABINET RESHUFFLE

1. IN THIRD CABINET CHANGE TO TAKE PLACE SO FAR THIS
YEAR, IRAQI LEADERSHIP HAS STRENGTHENED ITS CONTROL OVER
AGRICULTURAL SECTOR AND OVER DEVELOPMENTS IN THE KURDISH
REGION. CHANGES ANNOUNCED APRIL 5 INCLUDED A NEW MINISTER
OF AGRICULTURE AND AGRARIAN REFORM, A NEW MINISTER OF
YOUTH, AND A MINISTER OF STATE FOR COORDINATING ACTIVITIES
IN THE AUTONOMOUS AREA.

2. LATIF NISAYYIF JASIM, NEW MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE
AND AGRARIAN REFORM, IS A YOUNG BAATH PARTY PROFESSIONAL
WHOSE AGRICULTURAL EXPERIENCE APPEARS LIMITED TO SERVING
AS DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF THE PEASANTS BUREAU, AN ORGAN
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OF THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMAND COUNCIL. HE HAS ALSO
BEEN INVOLVED IN INFORMATION ACTIVITIES. AS A MEMBER
OF THE PRESIDUM OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PEACE AND
SOLIDARITY HE PROBABLY HAS DEALT WITH SOVIET OFFICIALS.
THE LATTER EXPERIENCE WILL BE USEFUL IN THE AGRICULTURE
MINISTRY DUE TO THE EXTENSIVE SOVIET ASSISTANCE THAT
HAS BEEN PROVIDED IN THIS AREA AND THE NEED TO CONTROL

THE ACTIVITIES OF SOVIET EXPERTS. THE DEPARTING AGRICULTURE MINISTER, HASAN FAHMI JUM'A, WAS A NON-BAATHI TECHNOCRAT. HE HAS BEEN SHELVED IN THE MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND RESEARCH.

3. THE NEW MINISTER OF YOUTH, KARIM MAHMUD HUSSEIN AL-MULLAH IS ANOTHER YOUNG PARTY ACTIVIST. HE HAS CONSIDERABLE EXPERIENCE IN STUDENT AFFAIRS, AND FROM 1974 UNTIL 1977 HAS BEEN SERVING AS UNDER SECRETARY OF THE MINISTRY OF YOUTH. HUSSEIN WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN FORCING THE CLOSURE OF THE JESUIT AL-HIKMA UNIVERSITY IN 1969.

4. BURHANIDDIN ABDUL RAHMAN LEAVES THE YOUTH PORTFOLIO TO BECOME MINISTER OF STATE FOR COORDINATING ACTIVITIES IN THE AUTONOMOUS AREA. THIS IS A SENSITIVE AND KEY JOB AT A TIME WHEN THE GOI IS MOVING, ON THE ONE HAND, TO SUPPRESS ARMED KURDISH DISSIDENTS AND, ON THE OTHER HAND, TO MAKE CERTAIN CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC CONCESSIONS TO RESIDENTS IN THE KURDISH REGION. (BAGHDAD 577 - TOTAL.) ALTHOUGH ABDUL RAHMAN IS TAKING A JOB OF NOMINALLY LOWER RANK, HE HAS CLEARLY BEEN PICKED OUT FOR SPECIAL TRUST BY THE REGIME. BOTH ABDUL RAHMAN AND HIS SUCCESSOR AS MINISTER OF YOUTH ARE ON THE RECENTLY SUBMITTED PLBRL. (BAGHDAD A14 - NOTAL.)

5. GOI ALSO TOOK THE OCCASION TO ANNOUNCE THE APPOINTMENT OF ABDUL DHANI ABDUL GHAFOR AS UNDER SECRETARY OF THE MINISTRY OF YOUTH. ABDUL GHAFOR IS ANOTHER PARTY ACTIVIST AND HAS RECENTLY BEEN SERVING AS A DG FOR POPULAR

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ORGANIZATIONS IN A STEERING COMMITTEE ATTACHED TO THE RCC.

6. COMMENT: CHANGES APPEAR TO BE ANOTHER STEP IN EFFORTS OF IRAQI STRONGMAN SADDAM HUSSEIN TO PLACE HIS SUPPORTERS IN BAATH PARTY IN KEY GOVERNMENT POSITIONS. ALL OF THE NEW APPOINTEES COME FROM ALMOST IDENTICAL MOLDS: THEY ARE YOUNG, WELL INDOCTRINATED PARTY ACTIVISTS WITH LITTLE EXPERIENCE OR CONTACT WITH THE OUTSIDE WORLD. IT IS WITH MEN SUCH AS THESE THAT SADDAM HUSSEIN HOPES TO MAINTAIN HIS CONTROL OVER SENSITIVE ACTIVITIES OF THE GOI AND TO MONOPOLIZE THE EFFECTIVE LEVERS OF POWER. WHILE HIS CONTROL OF THE PARTY AND GOVERNMENT NOW SEEMS SECURE, THERE IS SOME POSSIBILITY THAT HE IS DANGEROUSLY NARROWING HIS POLITICAL BASE, AND THE MILITARY REMAINS THE MAJOR QUESTIONMARK TO HIS EVENTUAL SUCCESSION TO BAKR.

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